

# EQUALIZING X DISTORT

Volume 12, Issue 02

June 2012

*ARSON was part of the first wave of the Toronto punk scene. They started out in '77, played their first show in '78, released an ep in '79 titled "(Livin' with the) White Folks" B/W CoHo CoHo and broke up by late 1980. Frank Manley brought attention back to the band with his release of the book, "Smash the State". Frank followed up the book by reissuing the ep on the first "Smash The State" compilation album in 1994 and more recently, the band started practicing again and in December. They played a memorial show for Chick Parker, one of their guitarists.*

**Introduce yourselves and tell us what you do in the band.**

Shawna (S): I'm Shawna and I play bass.

Rude (R): I'm Rudi and I sing and I write.

Tim (T): I'm Tim and I play drums.

Marcel (M): Marcel and I play guitar.

**What part of the city did you grow up in? I'm trying to get an idea of what part of the city has an influence on this sound.**

S: I moved downtown when I was 14 or 15 and I have lived here ever since.

R: Downtown Montreal street kid since the age of 15/16. I came here in the early 70's.

**Why did you come here from Montreal?**

R: The live scene in Montreal was being taken over by DJs and discos. There was a huge migration of musicians from Montreal to Toronto and Vancouver at the time because there were just no places for us to play.

**Was the intent to start a punk band? Were you into punk before moving to Toronto or did you find out about punk here?**

R: I always listened to a variety of music especially garage bands in the 60's. I was a big fan of the STOOGES and MC5 and the music coming out of Detroit and New York so the influence was already there. Going back to the 60s and listening to bands like the GRASSROOTS and the VELVET UNDERGROUND, MUSIC MACHINE, BEAU BRUMMELS, QUESTION MARK & THE MYSTERIONS, ELECTRIC PRUNES, LOVE and of course, early STONES, DOORS and later, NY DOLLS, ALEX CHILTON, etc. Those are all things I grew up with and listened to. To me there was always that sweet street level garage.

T: I grew up in a small town called Acton before it was worth the drive. The whole leather thing came afterwards. They always had the tannery. I came down to downtown Toronto in my late teens because I wanted to play in bands because the scene in a small town was mostly STYX cover bands. So I came downtown and there was bands that I was listening to. At the time TEENAGE HEAD were huge. I just wanted



to be in TEENAGE HEAD. That is just what I wanted. Some of the bands I played in, that is what we did and we started playing places like the Turning Point which doesn't exist anymore.

M: I grew up in downtown Toronto. I'm a Regent Park kid.

**So a little bit in the east end.**

M: I listened to the STOOGES and the DOLLS and all the glitter rock stuff.

**The VILETONES always said that the east side was a more punker side of Toronto because it was tougher.**

M: I think they were talking about the Blake Street Boys which was their own gang in town. I knew about those guys from playing baseball.

**How did you get into punk rock?**

S: I landed a job in a place called Larry's Hideaway. That was my big introduction to it. There was a lot of shows that happened at Larry's.

S: I hated what I was listening to outside the place and I just kind of stumbled across it and there it was.

R: For me it was always more of an attitude than anything else. The music was always there. If you go back to the 50's, JERRY LEE LEWIS would have probably been a punk at the time and if you go back even further, BEETHOVEN could also have been a punk because they all did their own thing with attitude so I think a large part of it was and still is, attitude. To me

there was a particular sound as I said earlier, that was a street level garage sound combined with people's ideas and concepts, ideas that they related to, things that came into your mind as you were writing and turning them into music, a lot of it was street poetry.

**Was there a moment where you were introduced to a local scene in Toronto? Where you said hey there is something going on here?**

R: It would have been something that was building up. I never related to the Gas Works crowd, I was always more into the alt stuff. I was a RAMONES fan before most people knew they existed. I saw the VIBRATORS at the New Yorker before most people knew who the VIBRATORS were, ditto the CLASH. It was a different kind of music and I was open to it, I was in touch with that vibe. In the 60's when the VELVET UNDERGROUND were nobodies I was a huge fan, I loved the sound of the VELVETS, LOU REED and his writing and could easily relate to that. That gives you an example, and sort of carries over into the latter 60's where you have the STOOGES and MC5 doing similar things. Doing street poetry and adding rock n roll to it. You had the NEW YORK DOLLS as well and, in England you had T-REX and MOTT THE HOOPLE who put more of a glam edge to it. Individual music with attitude.

**Tim, coming from Acton, were you exposed to punk or was it around when you came to Toronto?**

T: I was aware of it when I came to Toronto. For me it was more about the party. Look at any other bands, they took themselves way too seriously. I wanted to be a prog rock drummer when I was really young.

**Because it was an aspiration based on skill.**

T: Drummers are a different breed. You have lots of drums and you wanted to do that sort of thing. You realize that this sucks. This isn't a party at all. Everyone is so serious. So I started playing for my first band. I thought I'm not sure about this but it is a lot of fun.



Studio 3-Shawna



Studio 3-Tim

**Who did you first start playing with?**

T: It was a band called the GENERICS. We started off in Mississauga. We started playing bars in downtown. For me it was a big transition from wanting to be a progressive rock drummer.

**I could see that. There is a jump.**

T: Fortunately, I wasn't very good at it so I aspired to the idea of one tom and one cymbal even though it was sort of forced on me. At rehearsal I showed up with lots of things but within the first hour, every time I went to the bathroom, stuff would be missing. So I would come back and realize another piece was missing. In a lot of ways it was people I played with and people I hung with. I was only 17 and I was learning what was up. I guess I was influenced by people around me. And I am happy that this happened. What was the alternative? I could be working at a music store in Acton.

R: Johnny Blitz and his DEAD BOYS drum set

# EQUALIZING DISTORT

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 02

EQUALIZING-X-DISTORT MONTHLY is an extension of the weekly radio show heard on CIUT 89.5 FM every Sunday nights from 10:00pm 'til midnight (Participants: Rob Ferraz, D'Arcy Rix-Hayes, Stephe Perry, and Ed Pyves).

The show dedicates itself to the underground hardcore punk scene. There is a particular emphasis on international releases in the developing straight edge, garage, Killed By Death, power violence, and crossover scenes which means we play material like Shipwrecked, the Hunchies, Suburban Reptiles, Captive Bolt, and Corrosion of Conformity (C.O.C.).

There is a weekly demo feature (paying homage to the cassette format), weekly event listings, and a monthly top 10 retrospective look at new releases.

**Equalizing-X-Distort**

CIUT 89.5 FM

Sundays 10:00 pm - midnight

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## CIUT 89.5 FM - "Equalizing Distort" Top 10 Hardcore Releases for May 2012

Band	Title	Format	Label
1. NAO CONFORMISMO	"Basta"	CD	Self-Released
2. DREAM DATES	"Surfer Joe / Tallahassie Lassie"	45	Ugly Pop
3. CAPTIVE BOLT	"Rape, Slaughter, Slavery and Vivisection"	ep	New Ethic
4. KRUDS / RAMPANT DECAY	split	ep	Buried in Hell / Patac
5. ARSON	"Coho? Coho! / Living with the white folks"	45	Ugly Pop
6. DOOM TOWN	"Walking through walls"	ep	New Dark Age
7. VARIOUS ARTISTS	"New Breed"	Dbl LP / CD	Lush for Life / Wardance
8. CRASH KILLS FIVE	"What do you do at night?"	45	Ugly Pop
9. HOST	"There's nothing up there..."	ep	Cricket Cemetery
10. GENERATION HEXED	"You say you won't like it...but ..."	CD	Self-Released

Equalizing Distort can be heard every Sunday night on CIUT 89.5 FM at 10:00 pm. The top 10 countdown can be heard in its entirety, complete with previews of the picks and analysis on the previous month in hardcore, on the last Sunday of the month.



was a massive double bass drum kit with four toms across the set with cymbals.

T: How did he get away with that? I couldn't get away with that. I didn't know how to play that.

R: The drum kit took up an entire stage of it's own.

T: I think that over the years, that was a great thing about that period was it seemed to be about the song instead of what I'm playing or how many drums I have or the spandex that I can't fit into anymore.

**Or the energy of the song because a lot of those prog rock bands were trying to create the anthem. The epic song right but in the process it lost the guts to it. And punk seems to be a stripping back to spirit and the fire found in rock 'n roll roots.**

R: I understand that stripping it back, but the epitome of stripping back was when we did a cover at a Colonial Tavern show and there were four light bulbs hanging from the ceiling as your lighting, four light bulbs on strings and that was it.

**Marcel, how did you get into punk rock?**

M: I guess it was a way out, living on the east side of the city in the projects, this was a way out. I had a friend that was a little bit older than me and turned me on to bands like MOTT THE HOOPLE and all that glitter rock from England and it really was an opportunity, an opportunity to get out and play and, talking about stripping back, we did a gig at the Turning Point that was probably our first gig and that was the venue that gave us opportunities. Other than battle of the bands this was a stage with two or three bands and two of them had never played before and we got to play a Friday and Saturday night. That was our intro into being a punk band. It was about access to a stage without having to learn "Carry on my Wayward Son".



Arson's practise space, Rose Theatre, 1977 - photo by Ron Croft

**Right. The KANSAS song.**

R: It also got us out of that freezing theatre that we used to practice at on Queen and Bathurst. We used to rehearse at the old Rose Theatre. We practiced in the back of it and there was no heat. In the middle of winter we were standing there and we had these gloves with the fingers cut out so you could play guitar and stuff like that.

**I saw a couple of pictures on your Facebook page. Whereabouts was that place? There is a place that has an old awning....**

R: Yeah. That's it. The old Rose Theatre.

**Did it have that name the old Rose?**

R: No. It was called the Rose Theatre. It was a Chinese movie theatre and decades earlier,

they had a fire in there and after the fire the theatre was never revived. We were in the back, rehearsing in there and you could see remnants of the fire which were still stockpiled in the back. The owners would just rent the property out. The guy that rented it out to was a middle-aged Brit with a cockney accent named Bernie. He reminded us of the 60's gangster characters from east London. He would rent it out to us for \$50 a month. The rent was great but it was freezing in there. We would go outside to get warm.

**You mentioned to me in a conversation beforehand about the Phillip's Building. Did you ever practice at the Phillip's Building? A lot of old punk bands from that era used that place.**

R: We did the audition for Marcel there.

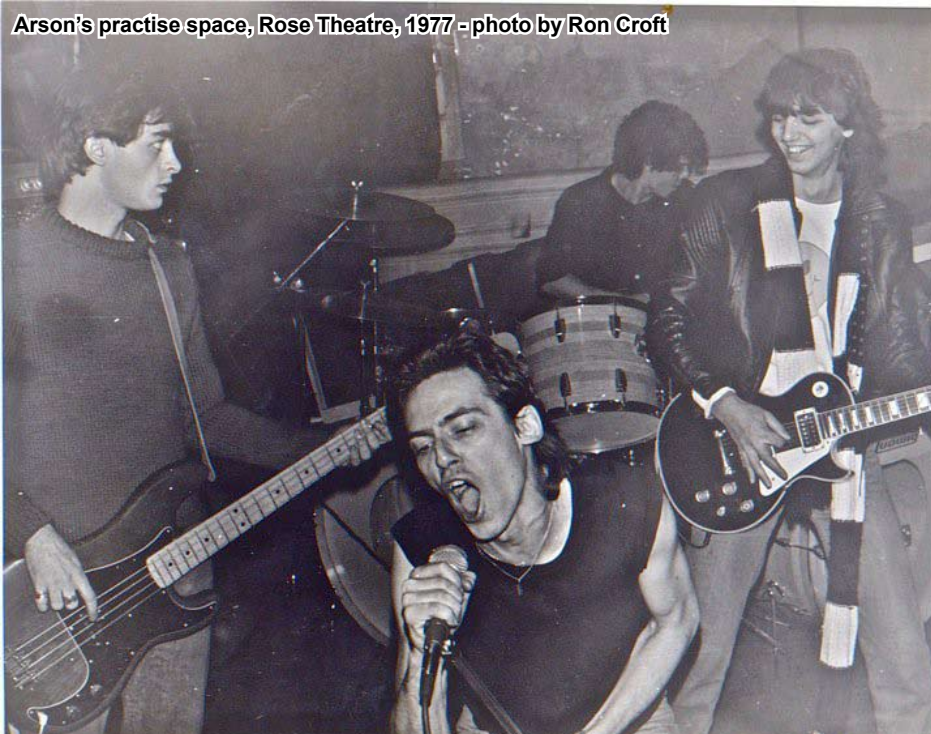
M: You're talking about that place where the UGLY rehearsed. Just south of Wellington off of Bathurst. The funny way I met Rude and he mentioned the VIBRATORS was that I was walking up the street going past the New Yorker, the VIBRATORS were promoting their show and they gave me a pin. I walk up the street and Rudi sees the VIBRATORS pin and asks me if I like the VIBRATORS. I didn't even know who the VIBRATORS were. It was just a cool looking pin. He caught me within 15 minutes of wearing a VIBRATORS pin. This turned into an audition we did at the old Phillip's Building that you mentioned and I think I played "Jean Genie" for about an hour and a half. I got the gig and I'm still doing that song.

**So the UGLY play a part in getting this band together.**

M: Absolutely. They opened the door for us.

R: They were accommodating when we were looking for a place to stay. We had a lot of ideas. At that time it was hard to find people that would share a space. We were all broke.

Arson's practise space, Rose Theatre, 1977 - photo by Ron Croft





M: But we never did share a space. It was a one time deal.

**So how did you come to stumble across the old Rose Theatre?**

R: I think I ran into that cockney guy. I don't know if you ever saw the film "Performance", but he reminded me of a character out of "Performance" like the 60's pseudo gangster. "I've got everything goin' here".

**He was always trying to hustle you.**

R: He had this antique junk shop so he converted this theatre and he worked there and his daughter worked there part time. I said to him that we are in a group and we're looking for a place to rehearse. "Come on in, I've got a place for you."

**I also understand that practice spaces were hard to come by.**

M: The funny thing about that particular space was in the 90's there was a guy named Nardwuar who came to Toronto with his band the EVAPORATORS and he got a little bit on Much Music. Instead of promoting Vancouver or his band he thought we would do a little piece on Toronto punk bands. He happened to be a big ARSON fan believe it or not. He knew about us rehearsing at that space. He knew somebody who knew us.

**He has a pretty incredible knowledge about punk rock.**

M: He went to the front of the theatre and at one point when we were rehearsing there, Nick, our drummer, had scribed our name into the concrete and it was there for years. He knew about that story so when he did his story he mentioned about ARSON being scribed in the concrete and he talked about the San Francisco sandwich shop that used to be across the street where the old geeks used to go to and he went on about the history. He actually used to cover an ARSON song, "Coho Coho", he was a big fan. I ran into him in Vancouver about two years ago and finally got to chit chat with him about it, nice guy.

**I want to talk about the evolution of the band if we could for a sec. Who was in the original line up?**

R: The original line up was myself, Marcel and a bass player by the name of Crazy Alex.

**And were you playing drums at the time?**

R: No I was singing.

**So you had already converted to a singer.**

R: Yeah. We had Gary Glynn on drums at the time.

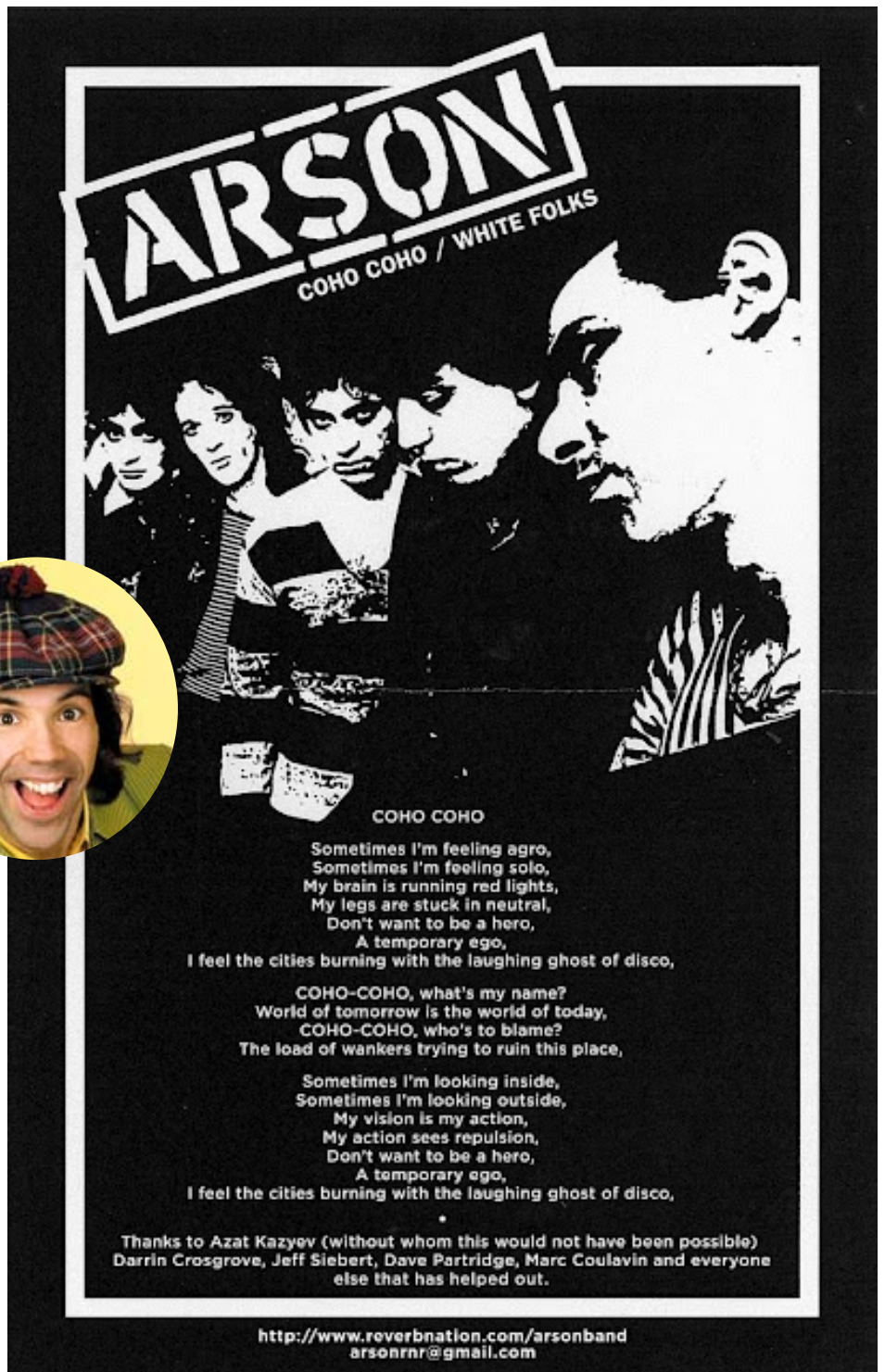
**What happened to Gary?**

R: Gary got through the DEAD BOYS show and a few more.

M: He thought he wanted to explore that progressive rock thing that Tim was talking about.

**So you guys switched paths.**

M: He switched back to that. That was cool, at the time we had done a couple of shows with the MODS and the drummer for the MODS was Nick Cautillo, we knew him as Nick Neurotic.



That band suggested to him that he should join our band because we were louder and a little more aggressive sounding and he was a loud drummer for that band.

**I heard it was mutual. That he wanted to be in a punk band too.**

R: Oh yeah. He didn't really want to be in the MODS.

M: The MODS could do all that stuff too. I guess we were a little bit more pedal to the metal.

**So Nick joined the band.**

R: Well, it was after we did a few more shows and we were in London playing with the DEMICS and I think that was the last show

with Alex and Gary.

**I was going to ask who Alex was.**

R: Alex was a really nice guy, he was bombastic, liked his drink and he was very enthusiastic. He played with a real aggression and gusto, there are pictures of Alex on our Facebook page. He liked to party and he took that aggression to the army. We did this final show with him and he realized this is not what he wanted to do. He wanted to join the army.

**Be all that he could be.**

R: Yep.

M: So a punk band and then the army.

Weird eh.

R: That's when we auditioned Mark, Spyke

Bandito.

**Was someone in the band that was in the POLES for a gig or two?**

R: Someone said that Steve Goode had been in the band. I didn't recall that. There was an era where we didn't have a bass player and it is possible he was a fill in.

**It sounded like it was for a gig or two.**

R: I don't recall.

**Tell us about Spyke Bandito. Who was Spyke?**

R: Sweet guy, good guy, Mark Gamage aka Spyke Bandito, came into the band

M: He was from the WADS.

R: He was a good player, he just fit in really well and the funny thing was that he wasn't the greatest bass player when we first met him but, he had this incredible desire to learn. He picked up stuff and ran with it and within two or three months he was playing his ass off.

M: I think what Rude means is he was more introverted than we were. The band gave him an opportunity to explore being aggressive, he married to it pretty well.

**How did he come to join the band?**

R: Somebody recommended him I think.

M: But through him, Chick came to join the band so we pretty much got half of the WADS. There was a recent memorial for Chick Parker.

**Tell us a bit about Chick Parker. He played in a lot of great bands.**

M: Very sweet guy.

**ARSON was his first band wasn't it?**

M: No the WADS were his first band. Very 60's influenced guitar player. He had a pop sensibility. Nice guy. Good writer. Intuitive.

R: You could sit down with Chick and he would never say anything bad or mean about anybody. He was very warm and friendly, just a really nice person who played a great guitar. He wrote well and contributed and almost anything we wrote, he would come back with more ideas. He fit in perfectly for the live shows as well, he was very animated and ARSON was a very visual band. Both Chick and Marcel were an amazing guitar pair to work with.

Live at the Horseshoe - Chic Parker, Marc Gamage, and Rude van Steenes



**It sounds like the WADS broke up and some of the members joined ARSON at a later stage of the band.**

M: I think there is a year to a year and a half where they came into the band. They joined the band about six to eight months into our beginning and the WADS had probably broken up about a year before we started.

**And then Mike Anderson came and joined the band. People know him as Motor Mike.**

M: I think our drummer, Nick went off to start playing places like the Gasworks. By getting into the prog or heavy rock thing he probably thought he wanted to go into that direction and Mike came into the fold.

R: Mike was available because the VILETONES were on the verge of disintegrating again, we got Mike and we got Tank. Tank used to be part of their Roadie/ Security detail before working with us. When Motor started working with us, that line

up was the one that did the recording. That would be the ep right?

R: Yeah. "White Folks" and Coho? Coho!". Later on, he also recorded the ANIMALS

cover "We Gotta' Get Out of This Place" for ARSON's "No Pedestrians" contribution.

**We mentioned something about a first show. Do you recall what the first show was?**

M: Sure.

**I thought it might be this show with the UGLY and the DENTS.**

M: Was that at the Turning Point?

**It was but you guys seem to recall that it might have been something else. This is a show that took place in 1978. July 6th, 7th and 8th.**

M: It sounds about the right time. It might have been earlier in the summer though.

R: We did something there but I think it was the audition for ARSON at the Turning Point.

M: This could be it. It certainly was the UGLY.

R: And that was followed up with a show that we did with the VILETONES at the Turning Point. Then the third show was the DEAD BOYS.

M: Based on the graphics, I would say this was the first show.

**In the book "Treat Me Like Dirt", Raymi the guitarist from the UGLY credits ARSON for giving the UGLY their first chance at playing a show.**

M: Anytime Raymi.

R: I think the UGLY may have had some problems getting back into the Turning Point or clubs. It was a long time ago but ...

**Would that show have been the first UGLY show?**

M: I can't imagine that.

R: No, they had played there before.

**It sounds like the UGLY had a bit of their act together already if you guys had asked them to practice.**

R: We had seen them at David's already around New Year's Eve, remember?

M: I think we came in on their coat tails.

R: We've never really thanked them and so we're thanking them now. Thanks guys, wherever you are.

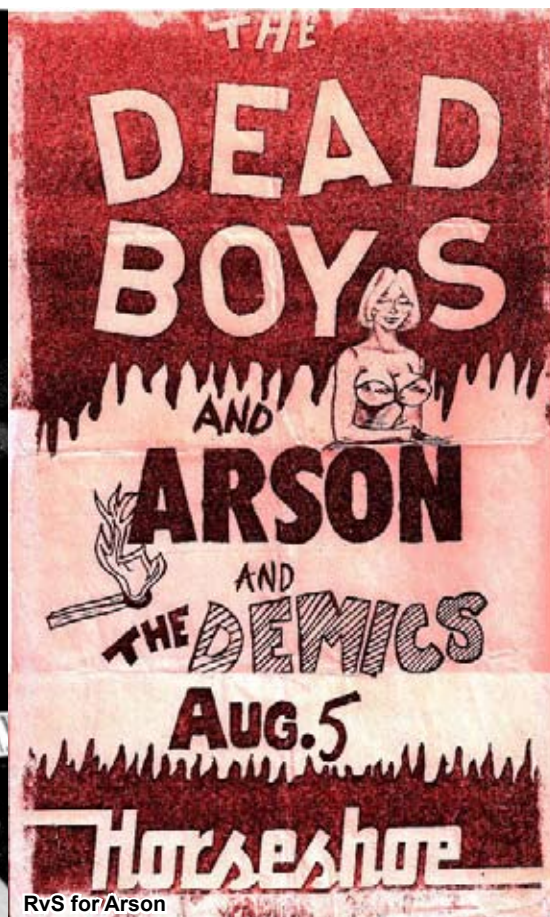
**The second show we talked about was a**







Photo by Ron Croft



**VILETONES show. Do you know where that was?**

R: The Turning Point, as well.

M: It was the gauntlet you had to run. You had to play with the UGLY and the VILETONES. You had to slave before you would get a headlining gig.

**They were probably getting shows and it was probably easier to get a show with them.**

M: Oh yeah.

**So your third show was with the DEAD BOYS. That is a pretty big deal.**

M: Yeah. That was a lot of fun.

**Did that create any kind of animosity between you guys and the scene? It is such a high profile gig and I am thinking that some people might have been pissed off that they didn't get on that bill.**

M: I think it was more of silence. When you're talking about the scene back then and I'm

not sure if Shawna and Tim were around at that time, it wasn't really about confrontation amongst bands.

**It would be more about building a scene I would imagine. There was so few bands.**

M: Yeah. When we got that gig it would surprise some people I would think but I certainly felt like after that gig we were on our own in terms of getting gigs, we weren't partnering up as much.

**You were more of a name.**

M: We sort of stepped above the opening band slot (locally), we were artificially in a different spot.

**In some ways you were more their peers, right?**

M: Yeah. And it happened so quickly. We hadn't played a bunch of shows or pissed off promoters, that typical thing.

**In fact, I think it was the exact opposite. I**

**think you impressed some promoters. The Gary's would have put you on this show. What was your relationship like with the Gary's? They must have taken a liking to you.**

R: Yeah, they did, that's how we got that show. It wasn't something we actively pursued, it was just something like "hey guys, do you want to do this?" There was no hesitation whatsoever, we were more intimidated because it was going to be a really good show for us. We were nervous about the whole thing because it was the largest audience we ever played for. That was our third show technically and from that point on, we were totally indebted to the Gary's for giving us that break.

It was a chance they took and we were as new as new could be with only two shows under our belts. We pulled it off and that was the most important thing.

**So for us who weren't there, what were the DEAD BOYS like?**

R: They were great, the energy was phenomenal. The story goes that the club ran out of beer that night so they had to go around the city looking for beer. It was a full house, sold out.

M: Stylistically the DEAD BOYS were a big influence on our sound, even the visual of the band (ARSON) was very DEAD BOYS oriented. The DEAD BOYS were always that bridge between ALICE COOPER crossing over into the punk thing. They were really just a garage rock 'n roll band that got hooked into the punk thing. They had lots of energy and



all five guys attacking the audience in unison which was a cool thing at the time and a singer that was out of control. It was a great recipe that everyone wanted to learn about.

**What about the DEMICS. The DEMICS were also on this bill.**

R: I saw a bit of their show but we were immersed in what we had to do so I didn't get the chance to see more of them. We played with them on a later gig and I always loved them. Keith was a great person, he was a good guy to know. I recall doing a number of shows with them, including a show at the Pylon Theatre and a show in London.

**So they reciprocated on the opening gig thing for you.**

M: Interestingly enough, that band was probably the band that we played with the most other than ZRO4 who opened up for us quite a bit. We had a relationship even though we weren't friends, we had respect for each other and we were doing different things but there wasn't a



huge contrast in our styles.

R: They were in London, we were in Toronto so you couldn't really hang out that much.

For sure but they would be an out of town gig that you could help each other out with. You also played with the MISFITS shortly after that. Did people know about the MISFITS at that time?

R: Yeah.

There was a flyer for a show on August 30th and 31st. It was a two day gig at the Horseshoe. Was that the show you played with the MISFITS? The MISFITS weren't on this bill but it was shortly after the DEAD BOYS show. We were talking about it being after the DEAD BOYS show but soon after. And it was at the Horseshoe so I was thinking this might be it.

R: It's possible because we did a series of shows and we did our own promo posters.

Did you play two nights with them?

M: I can't recall if it was two nights with the TROGGS or two nights with the MISFITS.

R: We played with the MISFITS, the TROGGS, and we played with SUICIDE. We also played with DESTROY ALL MONSTERS and a lot of those shows were Horseshoe shows, but we're going back 30 plus years. I don't think any of us kept an active diary or history but I think it was The Misfits

Sure you just lived in the moment. Okay, but do you remember playing with the MISFITS? Do you remember what they were like?

R: They were great. They were New York horror punk with the original line up with Glenn Danzig and Jerry Only. There's still a version of the MISFITS around but they've changed, Glenn went off to form DANZIG leaving Jerry is the "only" original left. I loved them, I'd seen them a couple of times.

M: The one I remember was SUICIDE where they were really interesting. They were such a



Live at Horseshoe Tavern -  
Photo by Ron Croft

contrast from what we were doing.

What were SUICIDE like?

M: They were just a two man band. Vega was out there on the edge of insanity and inviting the whole crowd to partake. That usually meant spit fest. It was cool. I chit chatted with him before the show and he wanted some feedback in terms of what I would have wanted from the show. It was cool that he would even take the time to get that kind of feedback.

It is flattering that he asked.

R: They're still doing stuff together and they also do independent projects. It was great. At that time these were the bands that either were really happening or were up and coming. They were going to be the next big thing. They were

unique in their own sense because they had one guy who played synthesizers and drum machines and one guy doing vocals.

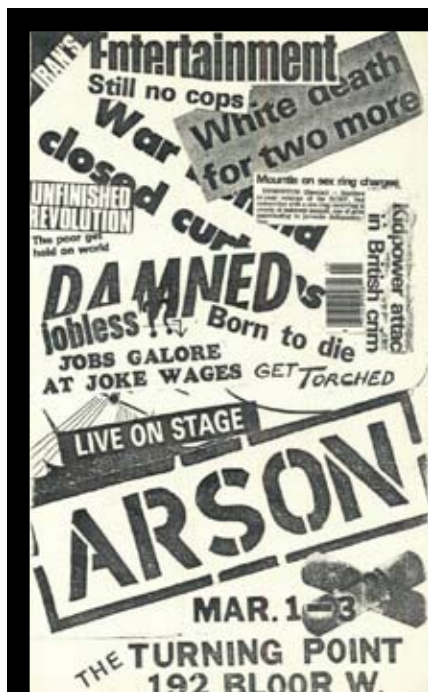
Did ARSON play the Last Pogo?

R: No.

Was there a reason for that?

R: I think there was so many bands that wanted to do that. It was a matter of who had more political clout, who came first. It was a show that started out with a really good idea. It got blown up really big. Everybody wanted to be there. If you got a seat than you got a seat.

Well I get a sense from other people who had been there that it felt like a bit of an end of an era with the Horseshoe closing it's doors to the Gary's.



RvS for Arson



RvS for Arson



R: It was the sound that Marcel and I created. It was an aggressive street garage sound with lyrics that were socially motivated. I took on

Photo by Ron Croft

I wanted to ask you about musical experiences a bit because you did a NEW YORK DOLLS cover recently. Did you do that back in the day?



# Sharks

**NO PEDESTRIANS**

This is an important album, a compilation of some of the better local bands recorded here at Collingwood Sound by Tom Atton. A record like this should have been out two years ago. One of the reasons Toronto's scene has not received much international attention was the absence of a representative look at what has been accomplished here. Because it's so late in coming, a lot of the bands that should be on it have broken up or been signed to other labels and are not available for the album. Yet it's still a damn good record.

It opens with The Sharks doing "Get Off The Radio," a good hard rock song and a defiant message to radio programmers everywhere. The timing is about a year off, but the improvement in radio has been marginal enough that the song is still valid. Next is the first of two songs by The Gabs.

## RECORDINGS

a sixties style rock song with Freddy Pompey singing. Chris Haight sings the other, which has the best opening on the record. The one out of Toronto band represented is SS from Winnipeg. Their song "Working Girl" has a great sound, kind of like praise Rocky Erickson music. True Confessions do a song called "Fourth Base," sung by Julia and featuring a spunky middle part. ~~Chameleon Records has released the record. The record is available at all record stores.~~

But my favorite things here are the two roughest songs, "Back Off Baby" by Tyranna is a pleasant surprise. Ralies singing clearer than I ever heard her live and Clavew's drumming excellent as always. With its punk sound and hard stance, it serves as a fitting

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121 Carlton  
Friday June 27

FEATURING  
**THE SHARKS**  
WITH  
**ARSON**  
AND  
**ZRO4**  
**PEDESTRIANS**



**THE SHARKS**

side a  
get off the radio  
for music  
gits, gits  
what's hot  
all the words  
the words  
we're getting out of this place  
"we're  
working girl"

side b  
back off baby  
what's hot  
back off baby  
ignores  
blow  
and  
fourth base  
true confessions  
I'll cry tomorrow  
the words

all songs except fourth base and  
we're getting out of this place  
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**WINSTON**



**ARSON**



**THE SECRETS**





**TYRANNA**



**ZRO4**



**TRUE CONFESSIONS**

**one night only**

Chameleon Records  
Presents a

## SHOWCASE AT HEADSPACE

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**TRUE CONFESSIONS**

**NO PEDESTRIANS**

AVAILABLE AT **Sam the Record Man**

# ARSON on



## NO PEDESTRIANS

AVAILABLE AT **Sam the Record Man**



R: We did.

**Were the DOLLS an influence?**

R: Yes they were.

M: But that was the only song we ever did. I have no idea why we picked that particular song. "Vietnamese Babies" isn't necessarily on the top of anyone's list. That was your choice.

In retrospect, the lyrics are poking pointedly at society in contrast to the other songs they wrote. I think I just liked the sound of the song.

**On the "No Pedestrians" comp you do a cover of the ANIMALS song "We Gotta Get Outta This Place".**

M: That's Rude.

**Were the ANIMALS also an influence?**

R: I would say so. I always liked Eric Burdon and the ANIMALS. Burdon was very blues focused, the son of a coal miner. He spent most of his life singing and writing for the underdog, the working class, and just surviving, he still does. Essentially the music and the style of lyrics that came out of England at the time were definitely an influence on me as were the early ROLLING STONES because they were more street level, deeper. The BEATLES were more of a happy, poppy, sound whereas the STONES and the ANIMALS represented more street cred.

**Could you reinterpret that song to create a scenario for Toronto?**

M: Interesting.

**When you're performing it live I imagine there would be a reinterpretation from the audience about how crappy things are.**

R: You look at the way things are and realize that we've have all been there.

**You look back at the time and people were picking on punks back then. From metal heads and rockers to cops and everyday people, you're smiling.**

R: We've had our battles for sure. It is a



Live at Score's Place, Dundas Street West - Chic, Rude, and Marcel - Photo by Ron Croft

survivor's song. It is saying we gotta get out of this place and find a better way. As an example, I think all of us at some point in our lives feel it would be nice if you could make a living being a musician, writer, or artist, as opposed to having to find a 9-5 job to pay your bills and have to find time for your creativity in your spare time. People don't realize how much time we spend in this process, this is a life you live. I started playing drums when I was 12, I still have two drum kits at home and I still fit in some time to practice. It's something that never, ever leaves you. Once you feel you have tapped into that creative vein, once you are on that track, you don't let it go ever, and even if you do, it always creeps back up on you. The thing that bothered me was that we were always putting so much out there and yet it just seemed so hard to make

a living at it and it's still hard to make a living at it.....and that example can juxtapose to any situation in anyone's personal life, where there are circumstances that can be changed as in "there's a better life for you and me"

**I wonder about the effect that the media had on misinterpreting punk or sensationalized it or didn't get it or ignored it. People didn't write about it so much. Or when they did write about it they misinterpreted it.**

R: Prime example. The STOOGES were out in the mid to late 60's. They just got the rock 'n roll hall of fame a couple of years ago. That's a long time. That's forty years to make it to a point where people are recognizing what you do and saying "okay, they exist, let's give them some money now." I think the general public are afraid of anything with attitude, something



RvS for Arson

RvS for Arson



Mike (Motor X) Anderson



uniquely different that represents some form of reality that they don't like or challenges their conceived sensibilities. People don't like truth, it's a fact. They don't like to see hardcore reality being thrown in their faces. They'd rather hear something snappy to dance too and that's okay but, you have to find a balance where you appreciate what goes on in the underbelly of the world where surreality exists. Imagine it more magnified then the place they call home.

**Okay, well this appeared on a compilation that came out in 1980 called "No Pedestrian". Can you tell us about the comp? How did you come to participate in it?**

M: Somebody contacted us to play.

R: Tom Atom, the funny thing about it was we were the only band to do a cover and at the time we thought we would have to give up our publishing if we put an original song on there. We valued our music so we did a cover instead. That was the impetus for us to do that, we still own all the rights to our material.

**Do you want to explain that?**

R: We didn't give anything away. We own all the rights to everything we've ever written so, if anybody ever records anything or we sell some publishing or, somebody wants to record one of our songs, we've maintained our rights.

**Is that what *Glamatron* is?**

R: Yeah, *Glamatron* is the publishing arm.

*Shades Magazine* described the cover as the best they had heard in years when "No Pedestrians" first came out. *Shades Magazine* was a Toronto fanzine.

R: I remember that. There was some good people involved in that. John Hamilton wrote for them. So did some of the other DIODES. He was the one that wrote the "Coho" piece. There was several people that used to come out and see the band. They were always very warm to what we were doing.

**I have one more question to ask about this. There is a photo on the back cover of the "No Pedestrians" comp that looks like it is an ep**

cover. Was there another recording because it looks like you were ready to do another release. I am wondering if there was other songs recorded in this session.

R: No there weren't. There was the one song recorded for that session. Basically Tom Atom was part of Chameleon Records at the time and he wanted to put together a compilation that represented Toronto at the time. He did another one with other bands called "No Exit".

**Oh, *No Exit*. Smash the State. It's on No Exit Records. That's where the reference comes from.**

R: Tom was good at that stuff. He liked getting together bands. The royalty cheques were phenomenal from that. I have got to say that I still have a cheque for \$0.34 at home.

M: That's funny. I got a \$1.29.

R: We do have royalty cheques that I want to frame. I think I am going to put them on the facebook page so that people can see how much we actually make. I think the person who did the graphics for that record put that together. The photo was a stock shot that we had.

**Getting back to a couple of influences, you did a STOOGES cover when we did a recording recently and you talked about the STOOGES. The STOOGES sound like they were an influence.**

R: Yeah they were. Probably one of the quick essential albums that defines music of the early 70's was "Raw Power". You actually hear vocals and guitar as raw as you could get them. You can hear the screeching and scrawling of the actual guitar being played.

**There isn't a more suiting title or song.**

R: It's a very gritty full out in your face sound. Like I said you hear the feedback squalls and squawks coming from the guitar and you hear the mistakes in the vocals. Everything comes through. It is one of those things where you can say it was recorded live off the floor. It emitted a power and a tone which redefined the sound. It gave it that edge, the balls that were missing in a lot of stuff at the time.

M: It is also the only song we have covered by the STOOGES, too. I think those are the only covers we have ever done. Those three that you mentioned.

**I think there is a couple more. I think you did "Wild Thing" by the TROGGS.**

R: Yep. And we did "Louie Louie" by the KINGSMEN.

**It is almost a standard.**

M: We would do it on New Years Eve.

**It is a party song. You actually got to play with the TROGGS for two nights, Monday June 19th and Tuesday June 20th in 1979.**

M: I don't remember a thing about it.

**You don't remember what the TROGGS were like. Wouldn't that have been a big deal to play with a band that you were covering.**

M: You would think so but my memory of it was they weren't as energetic as we hoped they would be. They weren't throwing their guns into the ring.

R: I think they were tired. To their credit their



hits were in the 60's and as a 60's band, it seemed like they were tired of doing the same song. That was the impression I got. They were good. The sound was there. Visually they weren't anything special.

M: We were young obnoxious energetic punks.

R: We went out there and kicked out the jams.

**There is a flyer in "Smash the State" for a FITS date from February 15th to 17th, 1979. You played three nights at the Turning Point. What were the FITS like?**

R: Claude was the drummer for the FITS.

I think they might have been from Etobicoke.

R: From what I recall they were more of a poppy band than the aggression we had but they were good.

M: We had roots in Etobicoke believe it or not. Our second drummer Nick was from Etobicoke. Through that we were the first band to play Lakeshore something. It was an old biker bar. We were the first punk band to play that club. We had done that quite a bit actually. We were able to break down doors.

R: We also played that ballroom out in the west end on New Year's Eve.

M: It was probably through Nick. We did a show a few months ago and there was a guy who had seen us at that club.

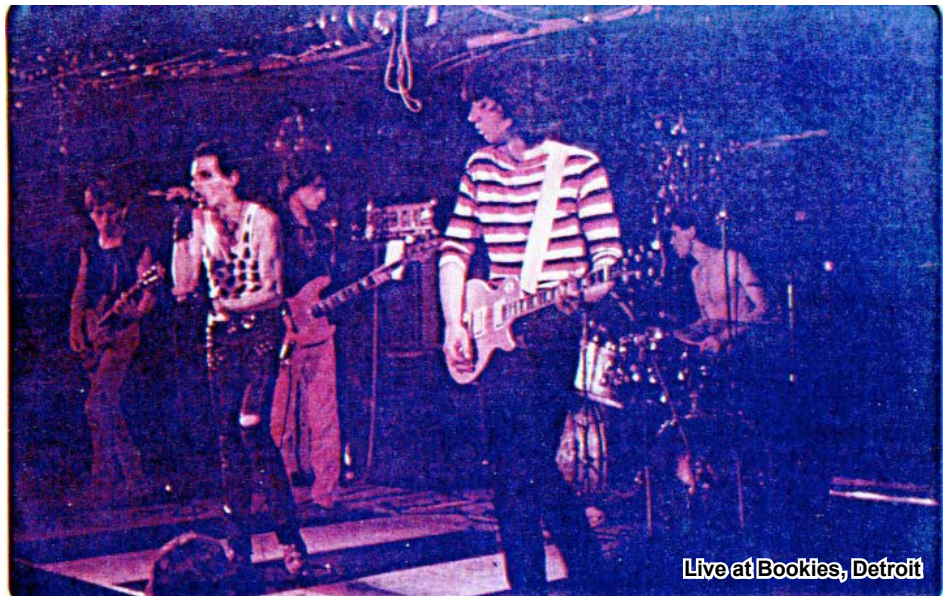
R: The Eastwood.

M: That's it.

R: Up by Brown's Line.

M: He had seen us and there were a lot of kids from that neighbourhood we were the first punk band that they saw because we played in their neighbourhood. They came in underage.

**The FITS had an ep that came out called "Bored of Education" and it came out in 1979. It was self-released and it was recorded at Cottingham Sound which is where you recorded your ep. Did you guys turn each other on to the studio or is this purely coincidental?**



Live at Bookies, Detroit

M: I think when a studio has affordable time people find out about it.

R: Cottingham Sound was on Queen Street West, which was a really gritty area. If you went out there late at night you would see the strange street girls out there that you wouldn't see downtown. It was a west end kind of thing. I'll give you an example, a girl in a wheel chair doing a guy in a doorway.

**Yeah that's odd.**

R: That part of the city was pretty rough and tumble at the time.

**Back in 1979 you released a single called "(Livin' with the) White Folks". That was the A Side. "Coho? Coho!" was the B side. Is there a story behind "(Livin' with the) White Folks"? What is the song about? I was thinking it might be about the suburbs.**

R: Yeah it was. "(Livin' with the) White Folks" was like livin' out in the 'burbs or as the CLASH called it your safe European home. The thing

is it was about living in a bubble. You're not seeing what's really going on around you and you're not really paying attention. So "(Livin' with the) White Folks" was coined from a phrase that a friend of mine many years ago used to say. His term was "Yeah yeah we live downtown. We're in tune with reality, we're not living with the white folks." That is where the song came from.

**You had to self-release this record.**

R: Yes we did.

**I think that is an amazing thing back in that time. Maybe you didn't think so because a lot of people were looking for a record company to put them out. But I don't know. What is your take on putting it out by yourself.**

R: It was expensive. It was something we had to do because unlike certain other bands who got deals we weren't going to wait around for that to happen. We decided lets just do it.

**Some bands had already their first single by**

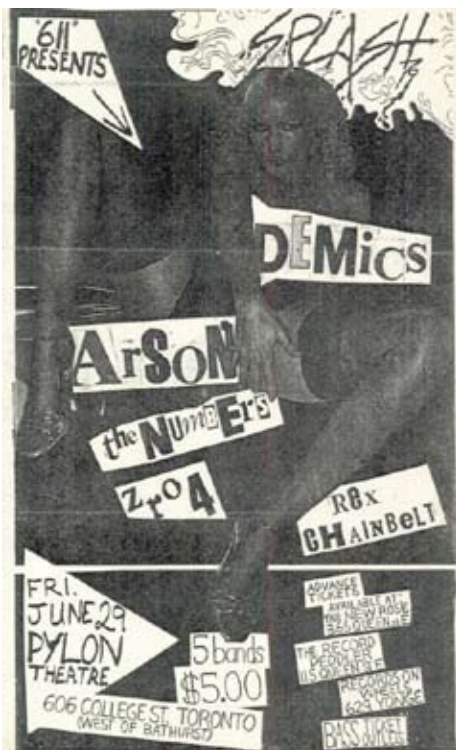


RVS for Arson



Backstage at Bookies -  
Deanne, Spyke,  
Nick, Neurotic, Tones,  
Rude van Steenes, and  
Marcel La Fleur





that time. So maybe they became a blueprint on how to do that.

M: Sure. Absolutely.

R: We talked to Tom Atom and Ken Doidge. They were the two guys that worked Cottingham Sound. It was their studio. They were very open to special rates as long as we came in after hours.

M: There were no record deals. We all underestimated the business side in Canada.

Or at least there willingness to except punk. I think a lot of them just wanted to see punk die.

R: It interfered with the status quo.

M: If we sold more beer we would have been okay.

I was reading in "Smash the State" that only 900 copies were pressed.

R: Yeah, roughly.



Rose Theatre practise space, 1978 - Marc, Marcel, Rude, and Nick- Photo by Ron Croft

Did you sell them all?

R: We didn't sell them personally, they were distributed to some stores here and stateside. I think I have one or two copies that's all I have left. They were destined for our friends in New York but I never got them sent out.

I have heard good and bad stories about what people did with their releases. Some bands would sneak them into stacks in record stores because they didn't know how to sell them. Some people were giving them away at shows they played.

R: No, we actually sent out a lot.

I imagine this would be a great thing to have.

R: We had 900 or so pressed, they're all gone. and within a very short time too, within six months. We didn't bother re-issuing it. I have people from Los Angeles who run record re-

sale places and they were offering me quite a bit for the single because they have demand for it. I also have someone from England contact me asking if I had any of these. But the good thing is I do have the master tape so we can re-press them if we have to. (Note: The single has recently been re-released on the Ugly Pop label courtesy of Simon Harvey)

Who was Motor Records?

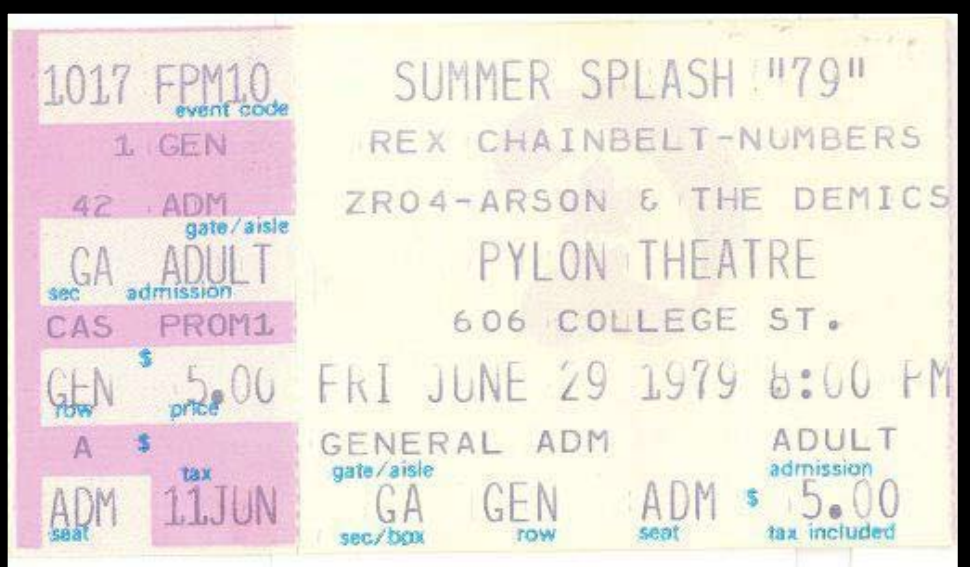
R: We used that because it was something that Motor Mike had under his belt already.

Has he put out anything before?

R: I think he had aspirations to put out something. We released it on that because it seemed like the simplest thing to do at the time.

The B-side of the ep was a song called "Coho? Coho!". What does "Coho" mean?

M: It kind of goes back to Motor too. The song was originally a song called "Schizoid Sister"





Live at Hotel Nelson, Montreal, 1979 -  
Nick Neurotic and Rude van Steenes



and Motor heard about...

R: Steve Dahl. He was talking about Chicago and the anti-disco movement. He said why don't we change some of the lyrics in here because "Coho" was their chant. We said "okay let's see how that works". We changed the chorus around.

**Was it from an experience of playing in Chicago? Did something happen at a gig you played. Or was it more something you had heard about.**

M: It was marketing 101.

R: It was something we heard about, something different

**Punk and disco were always at loggerheads.**

M: It was the president of Motor X Records who said change that lyric to "Coho? Coho!" I wasn't totally for it because it doesn't roll off the tongue very well but we did it.

**I have always been baffled by the title. You have to know the story. The story makes sense out of it. But before then I had no idea**



**what you guys were singing about.**

R: It was a calling card for Steve Dahl's organization. Steve Dahl used to DJ in Chicago and he used to have these large anti-disco rallies whereby he would invite all these people to bring their disco records to a stadium and have a huge bonfire.

M: He used to blow them up.

R: And all these records would go flying. You would see KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND on fire. And there were huge piles. There were hundreds and hundreds of records. It was definitely a movement that we could relate to. I hated disco. I hated that whole scene so much.

**There is a line in there "I feel the cities burning with the laughing ghost of disco." I am wondering if that was a nod to Club David's.**

R: No. That was a tragic thing.

**But I am wondering if there is some kind of reference.**

R: It's possible. It could have been in the back of my mind. I must say though that at a time like that, stuff like that shouldn't have happened. That was a great club.

**It did extend it's arm to the punk scene right?**

R: That was one of the first places I saw the UGLY actually.

**I think of it as a unique gesture in a period where punk wasn't getting any kind of support.**

R: That's right. It didn't have the venues at all. Even the Turning Point was dicey towards punk. There was a huge Jose Feliciano face behind the stage. There were certain things within the context of the scene that were revered and David's was one of them. The night it burned down it was sad because it would have been



a great place to keep on going as a downtown spot.

To get back to “Coho? Coho!” who are the load of wankers trying to run this place?

R: The government. Who else?

Had you played Chicago by the time you had written this song?

M: Sure. Yeah.

Did you go back to Chicago. Did you play more than once?

R: We went to Chicago for eight days. We played three shows there at three different clubs.

Do you recall where you played?

R: Mother’s was one of the places and Huey’s was another.

I saw a documentary recently called “You Weren’t There: Chicago Punk History 1978 – 1984” and one of the first clubs was called La Mere Vampere which translates into the Mother Snake. Would that have been Mother’s?

M: Interesting. I remember Mother’s being ...

It was a disco but they did punk rock on Sunday nights and then later on they started doing punk shows.

M: For some reason that sounds familiar.

R: There was a Sunday night show we did there.

Did you play with anybody or you might have been the main band because there wasn’t much of a scene yet. In fact when La Mere Vampere started there wasn’t a punk band yet or TUTU AND THE PIRATES would have been starting up.

R: We were the main attraction. I think we were the only ones on the bill that night. Kathleen was responsible for getting that, she contacted them

Did you play to punk crowds in Chicago?

R: In Mother’s. It was a mixed crowd, ditto for Huey’s, Chicago was still not “with it” so to



Arson 2011 - Rude, Tim, Marcel, and Shawna -  
Photo by Ron Croft

speak. Wax Trax Records was interesting but the scene in general was very underground with a certain level of discomfort towards the punk element.

M: We played Milwaukee on that same tour. It was a mixed crowd. We were playing to people who wanted to hear rock ‘n roll in a club I guess. There was a side to the band that was not straight up punk in your face. There was a rock ‘n roll side to the band, which I think in retrospect confused some people who would see the band. They would say are you a punk band or a rock band? Again I think that was the archetype of the DEAD BOYS.

And how the scene was starting to evolve and develop.

M: And I tended to play a lot of guitar in that period and that period there was a line in the

sand with how much guitar you should be playing. I think in terms of what you could get away with.

R: We took more time when we were writing stuff too. We developed songs so they had a flow to them and we made room for the solos. I’ve always been a huge guitar fan, always loved the sound of a guitar.

They were still there in the early punk scene just more brief.

M: But we were more into the DOLLS and the STOOGES. When the lead guitar took off it took off. I wasn’t going to play second fiddle to anybody.

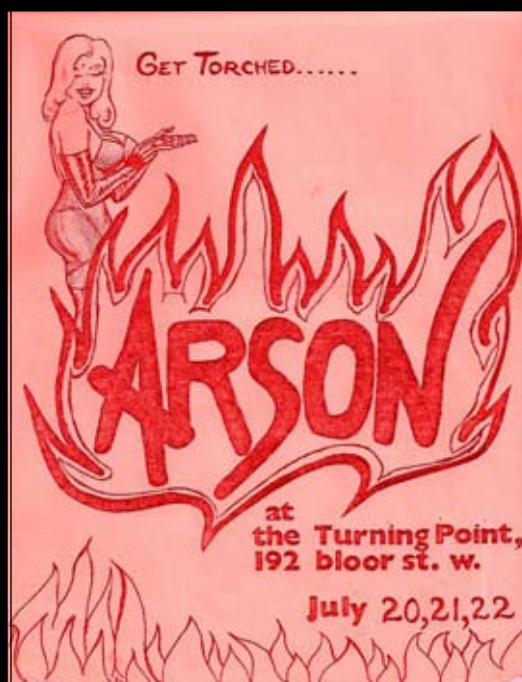
Unleash the guitar.

M: Absolutely.

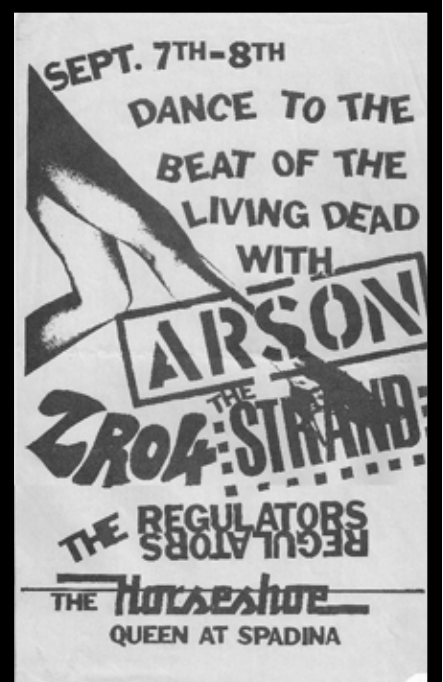
I want to ask you about Chicago. Do you know who you might have played with?



RvS/for/Arson



RvS/for/Arson



RvS/for/Arson





R: We did a show with JOHN OTTWAY & OLLIE HALSALL.

**Who was that?**

R: A British duet with a drum machine. We did a joint bill with them one night. (Note JOHN OTWAY is a whimsical English folksinger who often records with multi-instrumentalist WILD WILLIE BARRETT. OTWAY's first singles, included Green Green Grass Of Home, Turning Point, plus the mad instrumental I Did It Otway. OLLIE HALSALL is perhaps best known as the talented and respected guitarist in Patto. He was also in constant demand as a session musician, appearing with the likes of life-long friend KEVIN AYRES as well as THE RUTLES, VIV STANSALL, JOHN CALE & JOHN OTWAY.)

M: Didn't we do a show with the guy who did "Green Grass of Home".

R: JOHN OTTWAY and OLLIE HALSALL. That was the combination.

M: That was kind of a punk thing.

**Milwaukee. How the hell did you play a show in Milwaukee? And how did you get out alive?**

R: Zak's. That was the name of the club.

M: Our manager at the time was from Milwaukee. She knew of a place you could play and some warm beds and same home cooked meals.

**In between Chicago.**

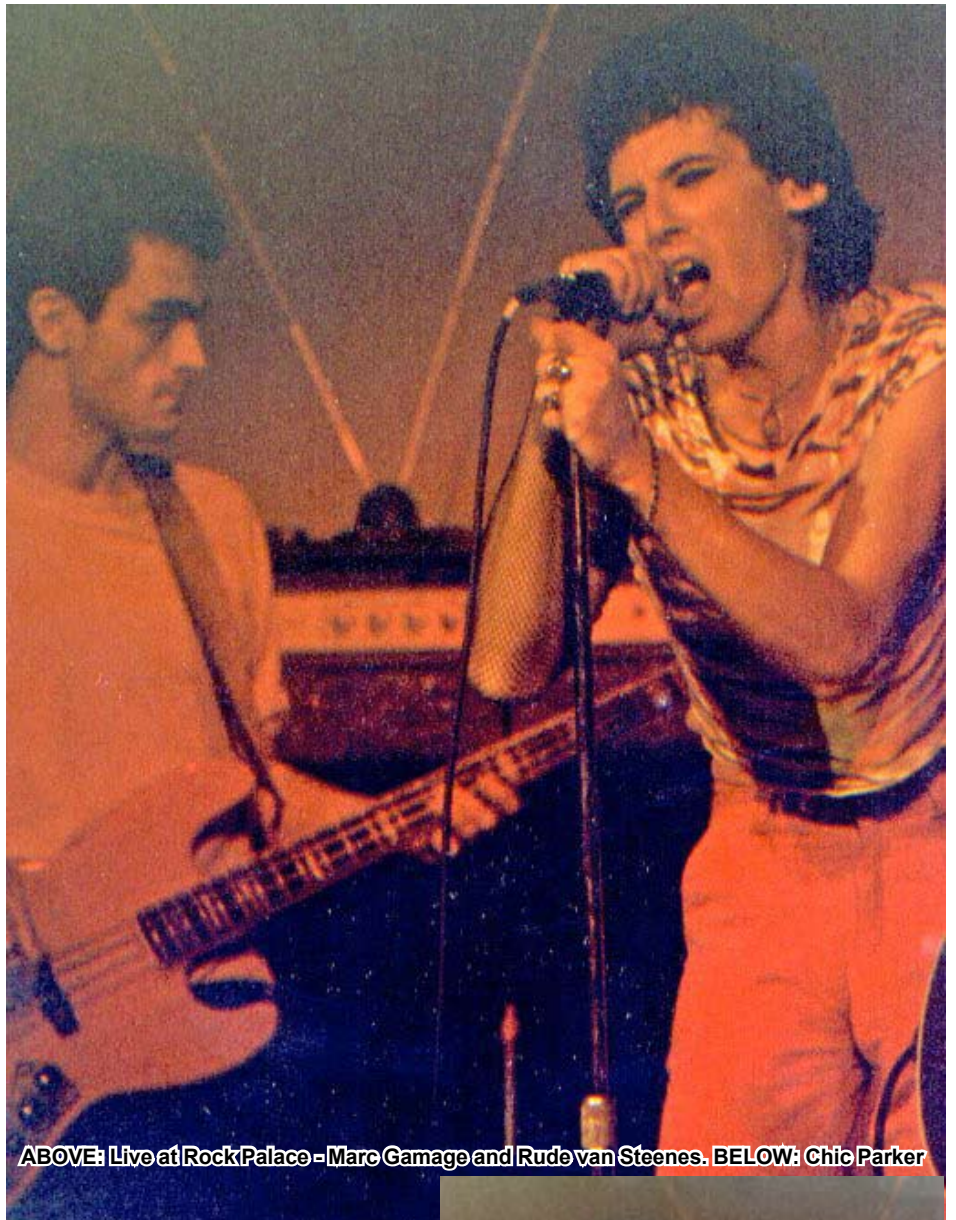
M: So Milwaukee bound we were.

**When I think of Milwaukee I think of the middle of nowhere. To this day they do have an incredible garage punk scene.**

R: At that time they didn't, although they were trying...

M: They weren't in the middle of nowhere. They were a nowhere step to somewhere else. They are in between which is a great place to be because you have access to information from all sides. I think we did Detroit, Milwaukee and Chicago. Detroit is like home central for us.

**You do a song called "Motor City". Is that a**



ABOVE: Live at RockPalace - Marc Gamago and Rude van Steenes. BELOW: Chic Parker

**nod to that?**

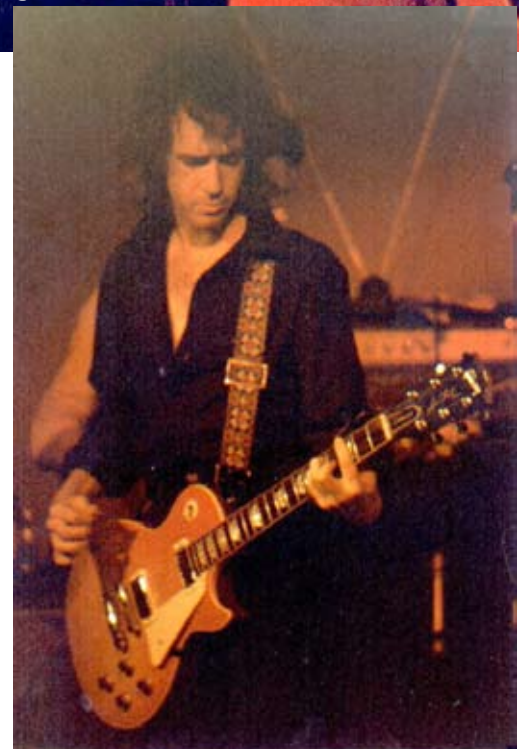
R: Yeah.

M: It's the city. It's the people. When you play in Detroit it's a call to arms to show what you've got. If you show what you've got you can usually be accepted. Detroit is the best place to play rock 'n roll in.

**You played there a couple of times. Tell us about those shows. You played Bookies I think in April of 1979. There is a flyer for April 25th and 26th. That would be a Wednesday and a Thursday night. What was that like?**

M: Great. When we were talking about playing with DESTROY ALL MONSTERS with Niagara and Ron Ashton (and Mike Davis) from MC5. Great show. Bookies, we played with a local band. We had some stories about Bookies. That would be the first place we would go to when we got Stateside. People would put us up, we were pretty welcomed there.

**What was Bookie's like? I remember when the UGLY came in and Raymi**





was talking about how they had a bunch of ashtrays or matchbooks from David's and I was thinking there was some kind of mob connection maybe.

M: I don't know about anything like that but it was an underbelly for Detroit.

R: It was a hangout for low level mobsters.

So what was it like to play a show there?

R: It was good, they had a nice size stage and a checkered dance floor.

No intimidation?

R: No.

Did you play with anybody from a local scene there?

M: I think we had. There was a band that put us up. We ended up having some problems with. That was Scott. What was the name of that band? Anyway something went missing. Somebody was doing something that was alternative in terms of cash flow and some cash disappeared. The boys from out of town are the first target. We were the scapegoats. We were there with Chick and Mike and they took our gear. They took our guitars. Back then you could actually take your guitars across the border. They took our guitars in lieu of the cash that had gone away. We had a gig booked and no guitars. It ended up all resolving and we got our guitars back.

R: Yeah, the song "Motor City" is all about that confrontation we had in a parking lot late at night and there were weapons involved. It was on our second tour in Detroit and it was not a great scene to be a part of. It all worked out in the end which is the most important thing but at the same time while the tension was there, you just really wanted to get out.

There was a flyer on November 22nd, 1979 that promotes the single as being out. It was at the Horseshoe. It says with special guests from Detroit. Who were the special guests?



Live at the Turning Point - Photo by Ron Croft



R: Would that be DESTROY ALL MONSTERS?

M: It's possible.

So they would have played here with you guys.

R: They came here a couple of times actually.

M: It could have been that band that took our guitars.

R: We took their guitars this time, ha-ha.

In 1992 Frank Manley had already released a book called *Smash the State* which was a discography of Canadian

punk. In the book there are nods to ARSON, some artwork, photos and some other things including a limited edition 45 of "White Folks/CoHo CoHo". Two years later he follows up the book with a compilation album called "Smash the State" Volume 1. "(Livin' with the) White Folks" and "CoHo CoHo"

gets re-released along with a previously unreleased song "Pretty Girls". Was "Pretty Girls" part of the original ep recording?

R: No.

M: We did another recording session at Thunder Sound. We did "Prime Time", "Pretty Girls" and we did another song.

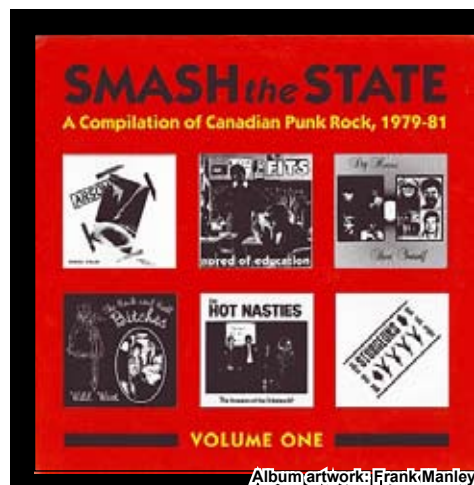
R: The only one I have had a copy of was "Pretty Girls". The other ones we didn't have actual recording tape of.

M: But I think we did three songs.

So there are another two unreleased songs.

M: They were very guitar heavy, we came away from the sessions going "Turn down the guitars, Marcel".

R: And Nick's drumming was like thunder bolts. The whole song to me is very representative of the sound of ARSON. I loved the way that was recorded. It was raw and energetic. The drums were bang on. The fact is that it was never released until this time.... and I thank Frank Manley for doing it, because all we had was a cassette copy, no masters and he took the



Album artwork: Frank Manley







Photo by Patti Meade

time to copy and remaster it digitally to get that version. He did a great job on it and I thank him for that immensely. That was the only way that song got out. I would still like to find out what happened to the tape.

**I am in pain because there is these two songs that haven't been released.**

R: The fact that these songs exist and that they were the true representation of the band's sound at the time, that was the insanity of ARSON.

M: And I think "Pretty Girls" was the tamest of the three or four songs that we recorded. These guys couldn't stomach the other three.

**You should let other people be the judge of that.**

R: I'm still on the hunt so if anybody out there remembers recording ARSON way back in 1978 at Thunder Sound get a hold of us.

**Would this have been your first recording?**

R: Yes.

**What was "Pretty Girls" about? Was there a reference to the scene or something else?**

R: It was more a reference to a groupie scene.

**A groupie scene in the punk scene or outside the punk scene?**

R: A groupie scene within the scene.

**So it might be about some people.**

R: Yeah.

**You used to do a song called "Hey Rocko". What was that about?**

R: "Hey Rocko" was written about growing up in the streets. Back when I was in Montreal I remember there were girls that would do things for small change and it was always done in the alleyways. A lot of my time was spent in the east end of Montreal, Old Montreal. In order to survive in the music and art scene there were people who did a lot of different things to get

some money happening.

**Is "Rocko" a reference to a certain character type?**

R: Rocko is a reference to a guy who would be a leader to a situation. "Hey Rocko tell me about the things you know, in the alleyway where they give it away for hope." Rocko had been there and seen it all, a witness for the prostitution...

M: That song was a departure for us, erratic beat bursts. It was a fun song to play, a fun song to hatch.

**And some people were playing a fusion style like the CLASH.**

R: The CLASH especially. They were one of our favourites.

**The punk reggae party or the roots rock rebel army. You did a song called "Permanent Damage". What was that song about?**

R: It's a very old song. It is one of the first songs we ever wrote.

**When I first heard of that song I thought of the "Permanent New Wave" comp. You said they had nothing to do with each other.**

R: It's funny you should mention that because yesterday I was going through some stuff I had and I played that track. We have a very rough live recording of it. You can make out some of the words but not all of them. It was one of those songs that was fairly intense about how things impact on people and they have a lasting effect. Certain points in your life or incidences that happen to you and the lasting repercussions.

**"TV VD". What is that song about?**

R: I think that it relates closer now to Marshall McLuhan's theories on media and the art of manipulation. I think it relates a lot to today and the crap we see on reality TV shows, which results in mind-numbing collateral brain damage

**And reality TV didn't exist back when you wrote this.**

R: No. And the sad thing is it was about the impact that television and the various media

would have on people. I think "TV VD" was saying get out of your shell. Get out of your safety zones and open your eyes, TV's not the only source of information. And these days I don't believe how many people watch or are addicted to reality TV shows, it's frightening. It's turned people into complete blobs and there's no real entertainment value to this. In a lot of cases you're watching people's lives disintegrate, people airing their laundry on television, it's become the drug of a nation. Do you really want to get into other people's warped and fucked up mindsets? Who controls you, your TV set?

**It makes people feel better about their own lives.**

R: I've seen snippets of Jersey Shore and I'm going what the fuck is that? It makes me look at things and realize "it's gotten worse over the years, not better."

**You do a song called "Pleasure". What was that about?**

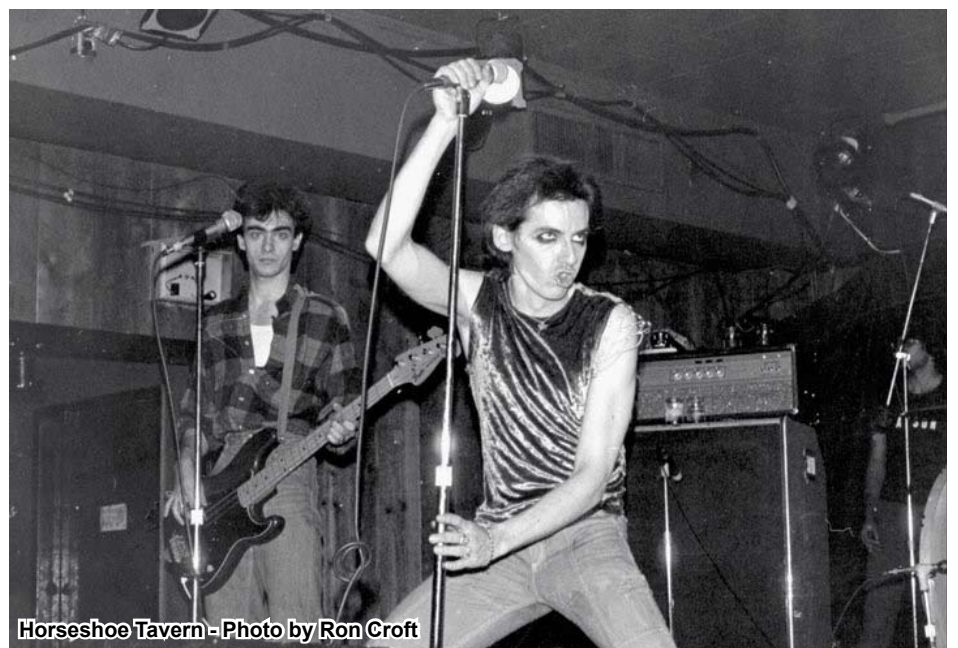
R: "Pleasure" is one of those songs that can be a metaphor for a lot of things. It's something that you get out of what you do. It's the reward for your creative process

M: It is a way for us to explore early STONES and some of our other influences and layback a bit, which for bands from our period, we weren't very good at. We thought we would just do it. Have some fun.

**You did a song called "Prime Time", which I think is an older one that you still do today. There is some lyrics that I was trying to write down. "I think I'll stay outside." Is that a reference to being alternative. Being outside of the mainstream. "I'm having fun" and "Everybody wants somebody out on the street tonight"**

R: Yeah, a metaphor for being out there and letting go, living outside of the box, being yourself, the prime time....

**Because "Prime Time" is a reference to media. The prime time news, the prime time**



Horseshoe Tavern - Photo by Ron Croft





slot.

R: Prime time for having fun.

M: I always thought it was about being an alleycat. About going out and having a good time. That's how I wrote the guitar line.

So we were talking about Montreal a little bit. First of all I find it remarkable that you played outside of the city so much. There was a lot of bands from that era that didn't get to play outside of Toronto. When TEENAGE HEAD were here they spoke of having trouble getting shows and they got sent to some weird places. You guys played Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee. You also played Montreal.

R: and Ottawa, New York City.

**Was that all related to playing out in Montreal?**

R: Montreal was one of the first places we played on that spring assault tour and that brought us to the Hotel Nelson in Montreal. The Hotel Nelson is in the old part of Montreal. If you go there now it is a four star hotel. To eat there you've got to be ready to drop a hundred or two without drinks.

**So they wouldn't really want to tell you about this part of their history.**

R: The funny thing is that old Montreal was a rundown part of town. I used to live in that section of Montreal before I came to Toronto. That's where all the artists hung out. You could get a warehouse flat for \$300 a month. I'm talking two or three thousand square feet. Heat and electricity included. It was all yours. That's where a lot of people lived. That was in the late 60's and the Hotel Nelson had fallen on hard times at the time we played there. It was live entertainment, it was great and it was packed every night.

**Had other punk bands played there?**

R: Yes.

M: We should have played there more.

R: We had three nights and all three nights were sold out. Saturday night was so packed they had to call the police in to dissipate the crowd because they were spilling out into the streets.

**Did you play with any locals?**

R: No we did the shows on our own.

**So did people know about you in Montreal or did they just want to go to a show?**

R: I think word of mouth got out. A lot of Toronto bands were going to the Nelson and playing there.

**Your ep wouldn't have been out at this time.**

R: No, we were new and at the same time Montreal was a whole different crowd, a whole different scene. People were always looking for something new. They were much more adventurous then I found in other parts of Ontario. If something new was coming to town and you advertised it properly you would play the first night and by word of mouth the crowd would double by the next night. The third night the crowd would just triple because they would come again and bring friends and as I noted earlier, the crowd spilled out onto the street and the stage became one with the dance floor. It was absolutely amazing, best audience ever.

**"Assault tour". What was the assault**



reference to? I was thinking of the idea of a punk band bringing punk noise to your town. There is the recurring theme on your posters. Even on some local flyers the assault tour is referenced.

R: You're right, there were two, the spring and the summer tours.

**And this one is spring fascism. What is the reference to fascism?**

R: It was a play on liberalism courtesy of National Lampoon. We take it to the point of trying to say ... "lighten up" while

incorporating shock theatre elements.

**Well the VILETONES talked about wearing swastikas as trying to push the envelope of liberalism. They wanted to see how far they could go.**

R: That wasn't us at all.

**You had more sexual imagery to it.**

M: Ours was much more kitsch and much more sensual.

**I think of the Ilsa of The SS and the she wolf films and that kind of play on S&M imagery.**

R: Love that stuff. (laughter)

**But Rude there are pictures of you wearing a German officer helmet so you were playing up the imagery. (actually it was a converted chauffeur's cap)**

M: I always thought it was provocative in terms of a Berlin thing. The sexy side of Berlin. We



never liked to have an agenda.

R: We never had that nazi agenda.

**It has been so long and I don't think people from current day scene's know why so they would see these photos and not be able to make sense out of them.**

M: We would get black leather and breasts.

R: Sex sells.

**And the juxtaposition with sexual imagery with the ultimate evil is a neat play.**

R: Ilsa, she wolf of the SS.

**You mentioned a show at the Pylon Theatre that took place in 1979. The show was on Friday June 29th, 1979. Where was the Pylon Theatre?**

M: It was a Chinese theatre in Little Italy.

I used to work at the Royal Theatre and it used to be called the Pylon. I was thinking it was the same place.

M: It is the same place.

**Was it common for band's to play there? They do have a stage there and they do have a sound system.**

M: I think half a dozen shows happened there.

R: There wasn't really a lot as far as shows going on back then. That was done by a couple of promoters that we knew. They got together with some friends of theirs to celebrate the music scene at the time.

**Was the Shock Theatre going at the time? I think the Shock Theatre may have been across the street.**

M: I think I saw the DIODES at the Shock Theatre. They played with the CURSE.

**I was wondering if this would have been a bigger event that people might have come to see.**

M: Possibly.

R: We had a great time there. We played with a lot of great bands like ZRO4.

**Did you get to play up on the stage?**

M: Yes. We have pictures somewhere.

R: We had that whole stage. It was massive.

M: That beautiful screen backdrop.

**They have the curtains on the side. And the old theatre seats. You played with REX CHAINBELT. Who was REX CHAINBELT?**

M: I remember them. I think they were more of a pop oriented band. They were really popular for about a year. Good players.

**But they played with punk bands.**

M: They were a part of that scene. As we talked about earlier Rudi and I were downtown. There were a lot of bands in the scene that were from the suburbs and by the way of the Turning Point would show what they've got. You would make friends with other bands and start doing shows. I think REX CHAINBELT was one of those bands.

**Were the NUMBERS like that too?**

R: The NUMBERS were former members of the MODS. But a lot of the bands like the FITS, the ANEMICS they all came from different parts of the city. They all contributed to the scene. They came down and played shows with different bands that lived downtown. We shared camaraderie there. Hopefully we influenced each other.

**You talked to me about doing a show in Bobcaygeon. Bobcaygeon is a pretty weird place to play a show.**

R: It was an open air concert and we never got to play. TEENAGE HEAD and several other bands at the time.

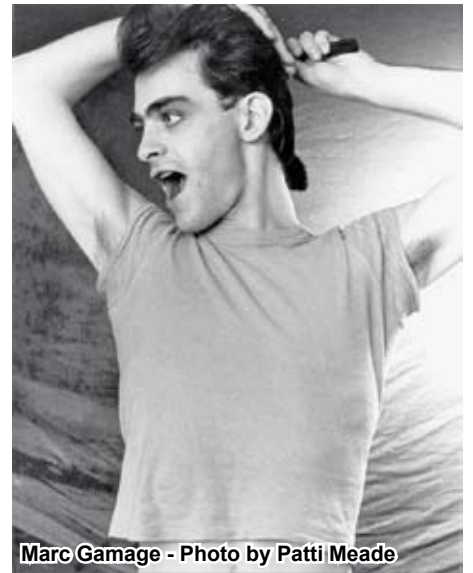
**But you were supposed to play?**

R: Yes, but the OPP and the local police shut down that show. We got up there and we were all ready to go up on stage and we were told to get back in our car and go home or we will get arrested.

**So you took that advice.**

M: It wasn't the first time.

**This had happened to you before. What are**



Marc Gamage - Photo by Patti Meade

**the details?**

M: That whole thing with Detroit where we were supposed to play a show and we are at the club and we were waiting for our guitars to show up. They don't show up and we are thinking about storming the stage and grabbing the guitars that are sitting there.

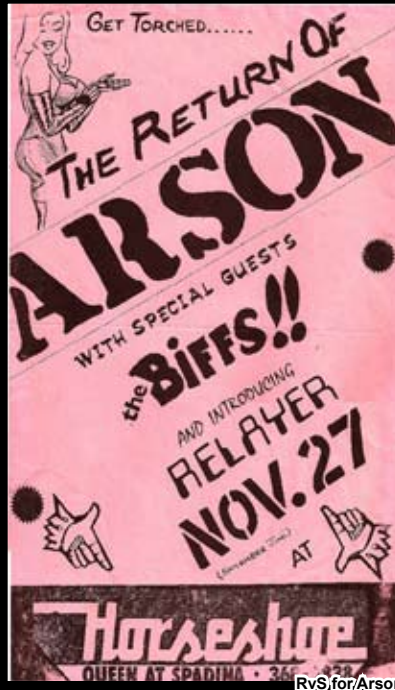
**On Friday July 31st you did a show with TYRANNA. Who were TYRANNA?**

M: TYRANNA and ZRO4 were bands that had female singers. Both had a lot of energy. Zero was more pop oriented. TYRANNA was more of an old school punk thing. Good band. A lot of energy.

**Rabies said she always wanted to be the leader of a male punk gang as a way of expressing how they were. So I have another flyer for July of that same year at the Turning Point. At the top it says "Get torched". Was that sort of a tagline for the band?**

R: Yeah.

**It works great with the concept of ARSON.**





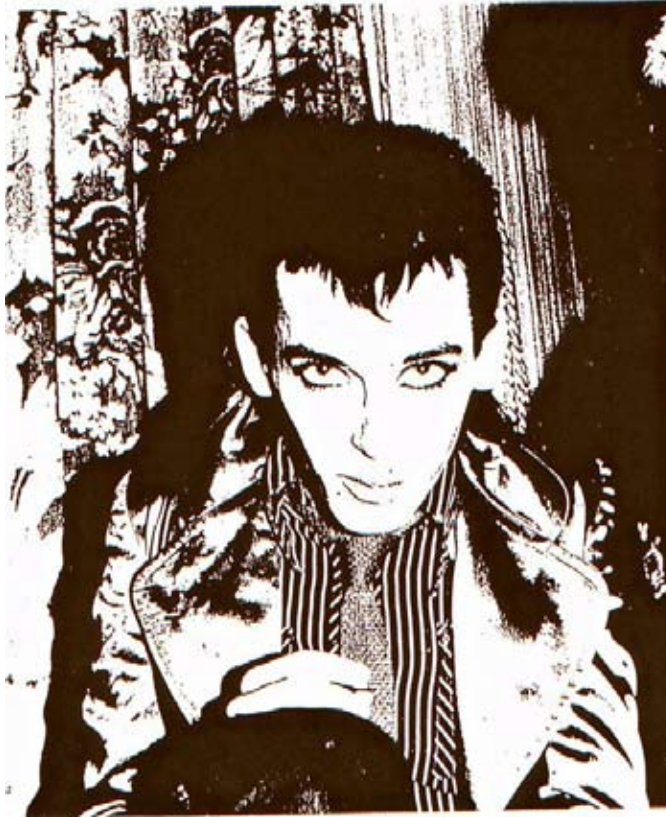
R: There was a Bill Ward character. Bill Ward was a graphic artist in the 50's who did these women who were very well endowed. One of his characters was Torchy, which seemed to fit in with the ARSON theme. I used the phrase "Get Torched."

M: So ARSON means hot chicks. **There was a show that you played at the Horseshoe on September 7th and 8th in '79. Sorry that this is more like name that show. There is a band you pay with called the REGULATORS. They were from London. They actually released a single around the same time you did. Do you remember the REGULATORS and can you tell us about them?**

R: I don't remember them. I remember ZRO4 and I remember a lot of the other bands. When we were on a lot of these bands we would be getting prepped to do our show. We didn't have time to watch the other bands. There is always a certain amount of prep time required to psych yourself up for the show. I found that you have to have that time to get ready for your own show. A lot of the time there were bands that I wanted to see, but I was unable to do it.

M: What were they like? You've heard the single.

**I have. It is also in a pop-ish punk vein. They have a three song single. They do a song about their city so they do sing about London so they didn't gloss over with bubblegum lyrics. It was a marriage of pop and punk. The songs were a bit more lyrically pointed. Do you remember the STRAND? I won't belabor this then. I saw a flyer for a show in October 1979. The 18th, 19th, and 20th. Where was the Rock Palace? What was it like?**



M: That was Lee's Palace.

R: Upstairs with the 45 degree angle steps. If you didn't watch yourself you went flying down them head first.

M: Kind of like the back stairs of the El Mocambo.

R: It was a great place to play. I liked it because they had a good size stage.

**I heard it was an old Chinese restaurant and it functioned at the same time.**

R: They still had the geisha dancers. That was downstairs. Upstairs was the Rock Palace.

M: I did a stint in the ANDROIDS. I played there with the DEAD BOYS.

**I had heard they had paper lanterns. You wound up going to New York City shortly**

**thereafter. Was this the last show you would have played before going to New York City? You were in New York by the 30th because this flyer has the date in it for Max's Kansas City. Would this have been your first show in New York?**

M: Yep.

**Did you play with anybody there?**

M: We did because we opened.

R: Somewhere at home I have the tag poster from New York. There were two bands and a movie. A documentary.

M: It was a fun show. Downstairs as a young kid it was neat to see Wayne County hanging out seeing all the New York rock 'n roll people.

**The next night you play a Halloween party with the PLASMATICS. How did you get on this show? And where was it?**

R: That was at My Father's Place (a club) in Long Island. We didn't really play a full set. It was something that Kathleen worked on.

**So it was something you were going down to play? Where is Long Island?**

R: It wasn't originally planned. Long Island is just a ways east of Manhattan, we drove there.

**What was it like to play with the PLASMATICS?**

R: It was great. I always love Wendy O'Williams and their guitarist was insane. Unfortunately she reached a point where couldn't function anymore and committed suicide.

**That was a terrible thing. There is a great picture of her interviewing some members of the DIODES in New York City. Was she doing some TV thing?**

R: I think she did a cable show.

**Would she have done an interview with ARSON?**

M: No.





**You mentioned another show you played called Club Stickball. Where was that?**

R: That was in New York City.

M: Was that an after hours club?

R: Yep. The first set was at twelve midnight.

**Would that have been after the PLASMATICS show?**

R: Yeah.

**There was a band you played with down there called NEW YORK NIGGERS.**

R: We didn't actually play with them.

**What are they like?**

R: They had a single out, "Just Like Dresden 45" and they became friends of ours. They put us up when we were in New York City.

**They weren't from New York were they?**

R: Ex pats most of them. One was a German ex pat who had moved to New York. There was another guy from Japan. They were all working as waiters getting paid under the table, all illegals. They were great, really nice people. They loved having other people come down to hang out with them and stay with them. They released that single "Just like Dresden 45". I used to have a copy of it but now I can't find it anywhere. But it is out there.

**There is a show on November 27th. I am thinking it is 1979. It says the "Return of ARSON". Would this have been your first show back from New York?**

R: Yeah.

**So the next show I have is for a show in 1980. This is June 27th. It seems like there is an 8 month break and it looks like it is to promote the "No Pedestrian" compilation because it is with the SHARKS and ZRO4. Both those bands were on the comp. Was there a break with the band. Would this have been a line up change?**

R: I think there was a line up change at this time.

M: Was I in the band at this time?

R: Yes, I think you were. Maybe it was Tony.

M: I think I had left in early 1980.

**What did you go on to do? You mentioned the ANDROIDS. Was this when you joined the ANDROIDS?**

M: I think I had left the ANDROIDS and was playing with JOHNNY LOVESIN for a bit, but that didn't work out for me. I think I went into a great depression for about three years.

R: I think we all did.

M: I don't think I did that show.

R: It was a major line up shuffle. We lost Chick and Mark. We were using Danny for a while on bass.

M: I think I did a few shows in January or February. Those would have been my last shows for the band.

**It sounds like quite a bit of turmoil.**

R: It was. Even doing that show was tough. I think we did a very short set, probably five songs. One of them was the showcase piece. It was funny, at the time you didn't realize how much you missed what you had. Things changed and you see what kind of impact it had on you. I know it effected me drastically because I went into a tailspin. This was no longer what I wanted to do at all.

**Was this the beginning of the end for ARSON?**

R: Yeah it was. I did a couple of shows towards the end of the year with a makeshift version but it didn't last.

**Why did ARSON get back together recently? I know you played that memorial for Chick Parker.**

R: Marcel and I had been in touch over the years and had actually written some new material before he moved out west. Roughly 8 years later, our paths crossed again via Zero (ZRO4) and we started to write again. We auditioned drummers and bass players over the summer and then got offered a show for October 2nd at



the Bovine. That gave us the opportunity to test the waters and it was good. Shortly thereafter we were asked to play the memorial for Chick (who had been part of the original band) and it was great to be able to pay tribute to him. Both Chick and Spyke (Bandito) were vital members of the touring/recording ARSON of 1978/79 and sadly, both are now gone. For Marcel and I, the music and the friendship we share continues to be a part of what we are.

#### Endlogue

A couple of months after this interview was done, drummer Tim Timleck left due to commitments to other band projects and was replaced by David Quinton (MODS, DEAD BOYS, STIV BATERS, STRANGE ADVANCE) and, towards the end of the year bass player Shawna decided to focus on her other band, SLUTS ON 45 which opened the door for John Sutton (WEAKERTHANS, SID'S KID'S) to complete the ultimate ARSON rhythm section! Having just played another CIUT Radio benefit at Cherry Cola's Rock N' Rolla Cabaret & Lounge, ARSON continues to develop new material and is looking forward to recording in the very near future.

NEW YORK CITY HARDCORE PUNK LEGENDS

# CITIZENS ARREST



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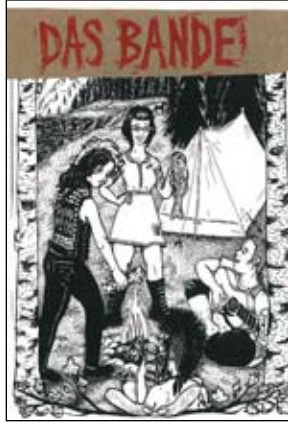
the SISTER



# REVIEWS

## Das Bande

Gena Meldazy, who used to be a DJ on EXD, has pulled together a zine on inspirational women in the punk scene. The zine contains profiles and interviews of these women who got into punk, what they think of the male over representation in the scene, what they think about the advances in technology and whatnot. It is funny because I just read this in depth interview with Alice Bag that Martin Sorrendeguy did in *MRR* and I was still left wanting to know more about the background of the times. *Das Bande* has even shorter interviews often being the equivalent of one page each. And although we live in a time where brevity is preferred I somehow feel cheated on not getting more of their story. It is like we get a teaser from Jill Bain (a.k.a. Jade Blade) about the DISHRAGS in Victoria. The DISHRAGS were one of the first all female punk bands in Canada and yet I know very little about them. I did learn that her cousin started Vancouver's first band the FURIES around the same time, which made it easier for her to take the steps in starting up a RAMONES inspired band. However I wish I knew about who they played with and crazy show stories or scene stories about the early Victoria scene. I know that Jason Flowers attempted at capturing some of those stories with his comp "All Your Ears Can Hear", but this too suffers from being restricted by space and so you only get one or two stories. I feel there is so much more to be said about the DISHRAGS and maybe that is the purpose of this zine. To give you a teaser that you will take and research more of. One of the profiles that I enjoyed was of Janick Varning who does the Varning fests in Montreal. Janick used to sing in an awesome band called HELLBOUND and sadly nothing is said about that in her piece. But her greater contributions of starting up the Katakombes which is a punk run space that shapes itself off the squat system in Europe does get mentioned. That is significant. And her background was interesting to learn growing up in foster homes and being inspired by Chris Boarts-Larson of *Slug and Lettuce* fame. Reading Sandy



Miranda's profile saddened me a bunch because she sounded down on punk. I knew Sandy as someone who was super enthusiastic about the scene and wrote a great zine that doesn't get mentioned in here. Anyway, Sandy's piece was very different from what I expected. Juls Generic's piece was very good. Juls sang in MARGARET THRASHER before moving to Newfoundland where she has been in a couple of bands since. She is also a regular columnist in *MRR* so there have been a lot of updates on Juls regularly. But this piece is Juls' back story. Zoe Dodd has a portrait of her in the zine and I wish someone had taken the time to get Zoe's story to

paper given she grew up in the north and moved to Toronto and sang for the BAYONETTES and did shows here. And there are a bunch of

other women from the past and present that could have been included in this issue. I guess the door is wide open to continue on telling the herstories of the scene. Hopefully this is not a one off project. Tara Bursey did sketches and is responsible for the SCHOOL JERKS record covers. She also did an amazing re-make of the "Warriors" movie film poster for an EXD benefit show. Tara is a talent and I would have loved to know more about her back story. But you do get Liz Worth, the author of "Treat Me Like Dirt" and you get Megan Speers of Wanderlust who also did the cover artwork for this issue. Catherine Roussel of STRIVER is in here. And Emily Kendy of Absolute Underground. My last pet peeve is the wasted pages. The zine is done on legal sheets folded in half. The inside pages are not copied on making for a full page that has not been cut out. It doubles the size of the zine and makes it difficult to flip pages. I wish that technical thing had been figured out but the size is a unique size making the zine stand out. (Gena Meldazy – gmeldazy@gmail.com)



## Ta Yeule by Benoit Pepin

This is a pocket size photo book full of show photos. Photos that Benoit took. And Benoit is a traveler so we are talking about shows in a day's drive radius from Sherbrooke. *Ta Yeule* captures pictures from MK ULTRA in 1999 to CAREER SUICIDE in 2011. I first met Benoit when he put on a show for our band back in 1999 and he was super impressed by my SPAZZ shirt. A straight edge kid who was also into power violence just like he was. Benoit and his brother were great hosts and are the backbone behind the hardcore scene in a place that I only knew previously for hockey sticks. And as I have come to trade things with Benoit over the years the one thing that is obvious is his need to document the scene. Benoit would be at all the important underground shows in Toronto and other places like Montreal or Chicago or Albany or Boston. He always has the ability to capture the moment be it on video or a photograph. This book is a collection of great bands over the past decade that have had an impact on the hardcore scene. There are loads of great bands be they from Quebec like INEPSY or the OMEGAS or bands from out of town like CRIMINAL DAMAGE or 9 SHOCKS TERROR. The photos are in black and white which are much more beautiful to look at. *MRR* has been doing these photo spreads recently and this book could easily be contributions for that section however the photos are bigger fitting into a half page size or some as spreads. Some bands are obvious for us who grew up in this hardcore sphere, but there are no captions so inevitably you have to flip to the back where a list and page numbers have been provided to give you clues. This makes *Ta Yeule* more like a trivia game ... Guess the hardcore band. The photos are incredible and this shows like a modern day *Trouble in the Camera Club*.





**Crash Kills Five** "What do you do at night?" ep  
This is a re-issue plus kind of release by the guys who would go on to write the surf instrumentals for Kids in the Hall. The plus is in the liner notes that come with the single. In the same way that Don provides the background stories in Treat Me Like Dirt he recounts how CRASH KILLS FIVE came together, their association with the DEMICS, their various recordings and how they broke up. CRASH KILLS FIVE start with a letter that Freddie Pompeii gives to Don Pyle from some kids in Calgary. Don goes to Calgary and meet these guys who have a band called BUICK McKANE. These guys would relocate to Toronto to start CRASH KILLS NINE. A line up change, a name change, a bunch of serendipity and the band records a single in an actual garage that was converted into a studio. Don's vocals sound like Joey Ramone. The music is more mid-paced like the DIODES except the drum structures borrow more from the CLASH, which is apparent in the song "It's always there". "Special school" is one of my favourites with the building BUZZCOCKS riffing. This is one of the rare snapshots of a band perfectly in the scene in its origin and makes particular sense if you have ever heard Don talk about his love for record collecting. And speaking of snapshots, the cover is of the TD Towers at night. It is a stark shot of the financial district which was a common view in the era before the condos took over the city's waterfront. Working with the title, the cover does an iconic reinterpretation of the financial district similar to what the POLES did with "CN Tower". It's clever. (Ugly Pop Vinyl - <http://uglypop.bigcartel.com/>)



**Pettybone** "From desperate times comes radical minds" LP

PETTYBONE have done an amazing job of pulling in so many influences into their sound. Take the cover of the CLASH's "Justice Tonight", I song I grew up listening to over and over again. This is one of my all time favourites of the CLASH's, and PETTYBONE take it so far away from the conscious dub track of the song's origins making you think it is an original. They combine some of the DEAD KENNEDYS style of demented surf meets country twang and filter it with a plodding grunge sound that also pulls from the slow-core of power violence and also makes me think of BORN AGAINST's "Well Fed Fuck". It's incredible what they have done to this song in making it their own. This is how you do a cover. You reinterpret it with your filters, which winds up breathing new life into the moldy oldie. Take the band's name which seems to be a reference to Raymond Pettibone who did all of the BLACK FLAG covers. And BLACK FLAG does seem to be an influence as might the PLUGZ with the band's nods to country which remind me of the "Repo-Man" soundtrack as is the case with "Northern Line". (Emancypunx Records - [www.emancypunx.com](http://www.emancypunx.com))



**Violent Future** demo

VIOLENT FUTURE are a new band formed out of former members of BAD CHOICE. But the band is more than that with the singer from URBAN BLIGHT playing guitar and the main city's promoter, Greg "Stuck in the City" Benedetto, on drums. So there is a classic east coast vibe to the band because that's the music that the members grew up listening to. Think of that primal sound hardcore sound that east coast bands produced while trying to reproduce the bands coming out of the early UK HC scene. It's the link that makes sense out of seeing that guy with the leather jacket with the ANGELIC UPSTARTS logo on the back who was at the NEGATIVE APPROACH segment for "Why be something that you're not" video. There certainly is the NEGATIVE FX or DYS sound, but there is also a CRIMINAL DAMAGE vibe in the songs where you can hear this creeping oi sound to the material. And the comparisons don't stop there. Christian writes



bleak lyrics that capture the dire times of the mid 80's in the Thatcher/Reagan era. Songs like "Fatal Reality" sum up just how dire things have gotten. Or "Goon Life" becomes a metaphor with how bully culture has become all pervasive in society. This is an inspired back to basics release by today's scene veterans. And you can download the file at <http://www.mediafire.com/?g54q2v8ljqkggmj>.

## FUNDRAISING

We wanted to thank the following people for donating to CIUT in EXD's name. Your donations send a message that our listeners value this style of high energy rock 'n roll. Since the last drive, CIUT has added an additional two hour program on Thursday night called "Rock 'n roll radio" demonstrating their commitment to the sound. Thank you to long standing donors who keep us going and include Jimmy Reed, Colin Brunton, Steve King, James Cavan, Thomas Clulow, Daragh Hayes, Henry Martinuk, Grant Coates, Steve Milo, Lisa Roosen-Runge, Saira Chhibber, Sunaya Sapurji, Matias Palacios-Hardy, Paul Abrash, Paul Miller, Teresa Miolla, Line DuPerron, John DiMarco, and Jeff Beckmann. We also wanted to welcome first time donors Amon Lennard, Janine Frenken, Matteo Scardellato, Justus Duntsce, Keith Maurik, Rose Palmieri, John de Marco, and Shawna Carlton.



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